

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 1271

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PE

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 5-6 CIVIL DISORDERS: VELASCO IN CONTROL;

ARMY ROLE; GENESIS OF MRP; VELASCO-MORALES

RELATIONSHIP; APRA ROLE

1. IN WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS
FEBRUARY 12, JOSE LUIS BROUSSET ESCOBAR, FORMER VICE-
MINISTER OF FINANCE AND NOW PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED
BANCO POPULAR, DISCUSSED THE IMPLICATIONS OF LAST WEEK'S
CIVIL STRIFE, THE NATURE OF PERUVIAN ARMY REACTION TO THESE
EVENTS, THE GENESIS OF MRP, VELASCO'S ROLE, AND THE
VELASCO-MORALES RELATIONSHIP. PRINCIPAL POINTS FOLLOW:

2. INITIAL ARMY REACTION TO GUARDIA CIVIL STRIKE -

BROUSSET SAID THAT THE ARMY IS NOT TRAINED TO HANDLE CIVIL
DISTURBANCE AND THE NORMAL POLICE FUNCTIONS. THEREFORE,
THE ARMY HAD BEEN RELUCTANT TO ASSUME POLICE POWERS ON
MONDAY EVENING (FEBRUARY 3) WHEN THE FIRST POLICEMEN STARTED ABAN-
DONING THEIR POSTS. EMPHASIZING THE DIFFERENCE IN TRAIN-
ING AND MENTALITY BETWEEN A PERUVIAN SOLDIER AND A
PERUVIAN POLICEMAN, BROUSSET STRESSED THAT THE ARMY HAD
THEREFORE DECIDED NOT TO TAKE OVER POLICE FUNCTIONS AT
THE BEGINNING FOR FEAR OF INCIDENTS IN WHICH INNOCENT
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CIVILIANS MIGHT HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN BY THE ARMY, PARTI-

CULARLY IF "AGITATORS" (READ APRA) FORMENTED CHALLENGES TO THE ARMY PRESENCE. THUS THE FAILURE OF THE ARMY TO APPEAR IN THE STREETS UNTIL THE DISTURBANCES ACTUALLY BEGAN. HE SAID THAT THERE WERE APPROXIMATELY 80 GUARDIA RING LEADERS WHO ORGANIZED THE STRIKE AND THAT THE GOP KNOWS THAT MOST OF THE GUARDIA WAS NOT ACTIVELY INVOLVED, ALTHOUGH THE GUARDIA AS A GROUP DID HAVE LEGITIMATE SALARY AND INSTITUTIONAL GRIEVANCES.

3. VELASCO'S PUBLIC ATTITUDE - BROUSSET READILY AGREED THAT THE FAILURE OF THE PRESIDENT TO SPEAK OUT ON THE CIVIL STRIFE PROBABLY SEEMS STRANGE TO FOREIGN OBSERVERS, BUT HE SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT, AS A MILITARY MAN, HAS ALWAYS FOLLOWED THE CUSTOM OF SPEAKING TO THE PUBLIC ONLY ON SET OCCASIONS (PRESS CONFERENCES FOLLOWING THE PRESENTATION OF AMBASSADORS' CREDENTIALS AND FORMAL SPEECHES ON INDEPENDENCE AND COUP ANNIVERSARY DAYS). HE SAID THAT THE PERUVIAN MILITARY MENTALITY DOES NOT REACT AS WOULD THAT OF CIVILIAN POLITICIANS AND THIS FACT SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND BY THOSE ANALYZING EVENTS HERE. VELASCO WILL SPEAK OUT IN DUE COURSE, FOR EXAMPLE DURING A FORTHCOMING PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONY. ACCORDING TO BROUSSET, THE PERUVIAN MILITARY HAS LITTLE PUBLIC RELATIONS SENSE, AND THEREFORE IT IS NORMAL FOR THEM TO HAVE THE COMMANDER OF THE SECOND MILITARY REGION SPEAK IN THE NAME OF THE GOP ONCE THE ARMY BECAME RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNAL SECURITY. "YOU SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISED BY THIS SEQUENCE OF EVENTS," HE NOTED SEVERAL TIMES, "IT IS THE WAY OUR MILITARY LEADERS THINK." HE CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT VELASCO REMAINS FIRMLY IN THE SADDLE.

4. VELASCO-MORALES BERMUDEZ RELATIONSHIP - BROUSSET SAID THAT VELASCO HAS THE HIGHEST REGARD FOR MORALES BERMUDEZ'S QUALIFICATIONS BOTH AS A SOLDIER AND A LEADER. HE LAID STRESS ON THE FACT THAT "ALL THE CABINET" FIRMLY SUPPORTS MORALES AND THAT GIVEN MORALES BERMUDEZ'S LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND INTELLIGENCE, HE IS ONE OF THE VERY FEW PERUVIAN GENERALS WHO CANNOT ONLY GET THE EAR OF THE PRESIDENT BUT CAN ALSO MAKE HIS VIEWS PREVAIL OVER VELASCO'S INITIAL RETICENCE TO LISTEN

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TO DISAGREEABLE ADVICE. HE SAID MORALES BERMUDEZ WILL PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE AS PRIME MINISTER AND WILL THEN MAKE HIS WEIGHT FELT IN GOVERNMENT COUNCILS. HE TENDED TO DISMISS THE CONTENTION THAT "MORE RADICAL" GENERALS WHO DISAGREE WITH MORALES BERMUDEZ ON POLICY GROUNDS WOULD TRY TO CIRCUMVENT HIM. HE SAID THAT ALL THE HIGHER RANKS OF THE PERUVIAN ARMY REALIZE THAT MORALES BERMUDEZ IS A CUT ABOVE MOST OF HIS COLLEAGUES.

5. GENESIS OF MRP - BROUSSET SAID THAT CIVILIAN PROFESSIONALS WHO BELIEVE IN THE GOALS OF THE REVOLUTION HAVE LONG BEEN DISTURBED BY THE LACK OF CIVILIAN BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE GOP. HE NOTED THAT PRIOR TO LAST WEEK'S EVENTS, VARIOUS OF HIS CIVILIAN COLLEAGUES HAD DISCUSSED THE NEED FOR SOME KIND OF POLITICAL MOVEMENT WHICH COULD EVENTUALLY SERVE AS AN INSTITUTIONAL CHANNEL FOR THE VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE POPULATION TO MAKE THEIR VIEWS KNOWN TO THE GOP. HE SAID THAT ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, HE RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM THE ORGANIZERS OF THE MRP WHO HAD DRAWN UP A DECLARATION OF THEIR PRINCIPLES. HE SAID THAT WITHOUT ASKING WHO THE OTHER SPONSORS MIGHT BE, ONCE HE HEARD THE DECLARATION'S CONTENTS, HE AGREED WITH THEM AND GAVE HIS CONSENT THAT HIS NAME SHOULD APPEAR IN THE DECLARATION. HE COMMENTED THAT THE MRP HAS NO DIRECT RELATIONSHIP TO THE GOP, WAS "NOT SPONSORED NOR ORGANIZED BY THE GOP" AND THAT IN FACT THE DECLARATION PUBLISHED TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, CAUGHT THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BY SURPRISE. THE DECLARATION WAS DISCUSSED AT THE CABINET MEETING, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT KNOW DETAILS OF THE DISCUSSION. HE WAS TELEPHONED BY A CABINET MEMBER (NOT IDENTIFIED) WHO ASKED HIM ABOUT HIS SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION. BROUSSET REPLIED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WAS WHETHER OR NOT THE CONTENTS OF THE DECLARATION ITSELF WAS TROUBLESOME TO THE GOVERNMENT AND NOT JUST ITS APPEARANCE AND HIS SIGNATURE OF IT AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME. THE CABINET MEMBER STATED THAT THE CONTENT HAD NOT CAUSED ANY PROBLEMS TO THE CABINET. HE ADMITTED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE ROLE, IF ANY, OF THE MRP MIGHT BE, SINCE THE MILITARY HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN SUSPICIOUS OF POLITICAL MOVEMENTS OUTSIDE THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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CONTROL. HE SAID THAT, IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW, THE MRP SHOULD REPRESENT THE "PLURALIST" VIEWS OF THE REVOLUTION, AND THAT HE WOULD WITHDRAW HIS SUPPORT SHOULD IT EVENTUALLY BECOME A STALKING HORSE FOR SPECIFIC POLITICAL FACTIONS (READ MARXISTS).

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LIMA 1271

6. APRA ROLE IN STRIVE - BROUSSET NOTED THAT THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF APRA HAD DECIDED, ON THE NATIONAL PARTY LEVEL, NOT TO ORDER ITS MILITANTS INTO THE STREETS WHEN THE GUARDIA CIVIL STRIKE BROKE OUT. RATHER, INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTIONS WERE PASSED TO THE APRA "COMMANDO UNIVERSITARIO" (PRINCIPALLY BASED AT VILLARREAL) TO SUPPORT THE GUARDIA. IN THIS WAY, APRA "AGITATORS" COULD PRESSURE THE GOP WITHOUT COMMITTING THE APRA PARTY ITSELF TO A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOP. BROUSSET SAID THERE HAVE BEEN TRADITIONAL TIES BETWEEN APRA AND THE GUARDIA CIVIL, MEMBERS OF WHICH HAVE STUDIED AT VILLARREAL. HE SAID THIS OCCURRED BECAUSE OF THE ANTIPATHY BETWEEN THE ARMY AND APRA, SO THAT THE LATTER, YEARS AGO, DECIDED TO CULTIVATE THE GUARDIA SINCE IT COULD MAKE NO HEADWAY WITH THE ARMY.

7. COMMENT: BROUSSET, A PROFESSIONAL ECONOMIST AND PROTEGE OF MORALES BERMUDEZ, IS AN EXTREMELY WELL-INFORMED OBSERVER OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION HERE. WHILE BASICALLY SUPPORTING THE GOP "POLITICAL LINE" IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH US, HE CLEARLY IS CONVINCED THAT VELASCO REMAINS IN CONTROL OF THE ARMY AND THAT FRICTION BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER WILL BE MINIMAL. WHILE HIS OPINION OF THE VELASCO-MORALES BERMUDEZ RELATIONSHIP ARE OBVIOUSLY COLORED BY CONFIDENTIAL

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HIS PERSONAL TIES TO THE LATTER, HIS VIEWS CARRY WEIGHT GIVEN HIS ACCESS TO THE KEY LEADERSHIP OF THE COUNTRY.

8. WITH RESPECT TO THE ORGANIZERS OF THE MRP,

BROUSSET APPEARS TO BE ODD MAN OUT IN THAT COLLECTION OF LEFTIST/MARXIST OPPORTUNISTS. HE IS A COOL, SOPHISTICATED, AND SUAVE BUREAUCRAT, FOR ALL THAT HE SUPPORTS THE BASIC GOALS OF THE REVOLUTION (AS DOES MORALES BERMUDEZ). OTHER SOURCES REPORT THAT HIS ASSOCIATION WITH THIS GROUP HAS THE BLESSING OF THE PRIME MINISTER (WHO MAY BE THE CABINET MINISTER REFERRED TO ABOVE). THIS MAY WELL BE THE CASE, AS MORALES BERMUDEZ WOULD HAVE AMPLE REASON FOR WANTING A TRUSTED CONFIDANT WITHIN A GROUP OTHERWISE CONSIDERABLY TO THE LEFT OF HIMSELF.

8. BROUSSET'S COMMENTS ON THE ECONOMY ARE REPORTED SEPARATELY.
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